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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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13 December 1966

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Information as of 1600
13 December 1966

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HIGHLIGHTS

North Vietnamese air defense elements put up heavy resistance to US air strikes on 13 December. Three US aircraft were lost.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
No significant contact has been reported in any of the 27 allied ground operations currently in progress (Para. 1). ARVN forces in the multi-battalion search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 270B overran a Viet Cong POW camp in the delta province of Chuong Thien on 13 December (Para. 2).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The Constituent Assembly continued to debate on 12 December whether the future government should have a prime minister in addition to a president (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
DRV air defense elements put up heavy resistance to US air strikes on 13 December (Paras. 1-3). North Korean pilots again active over North Vietnam (Para. 4).

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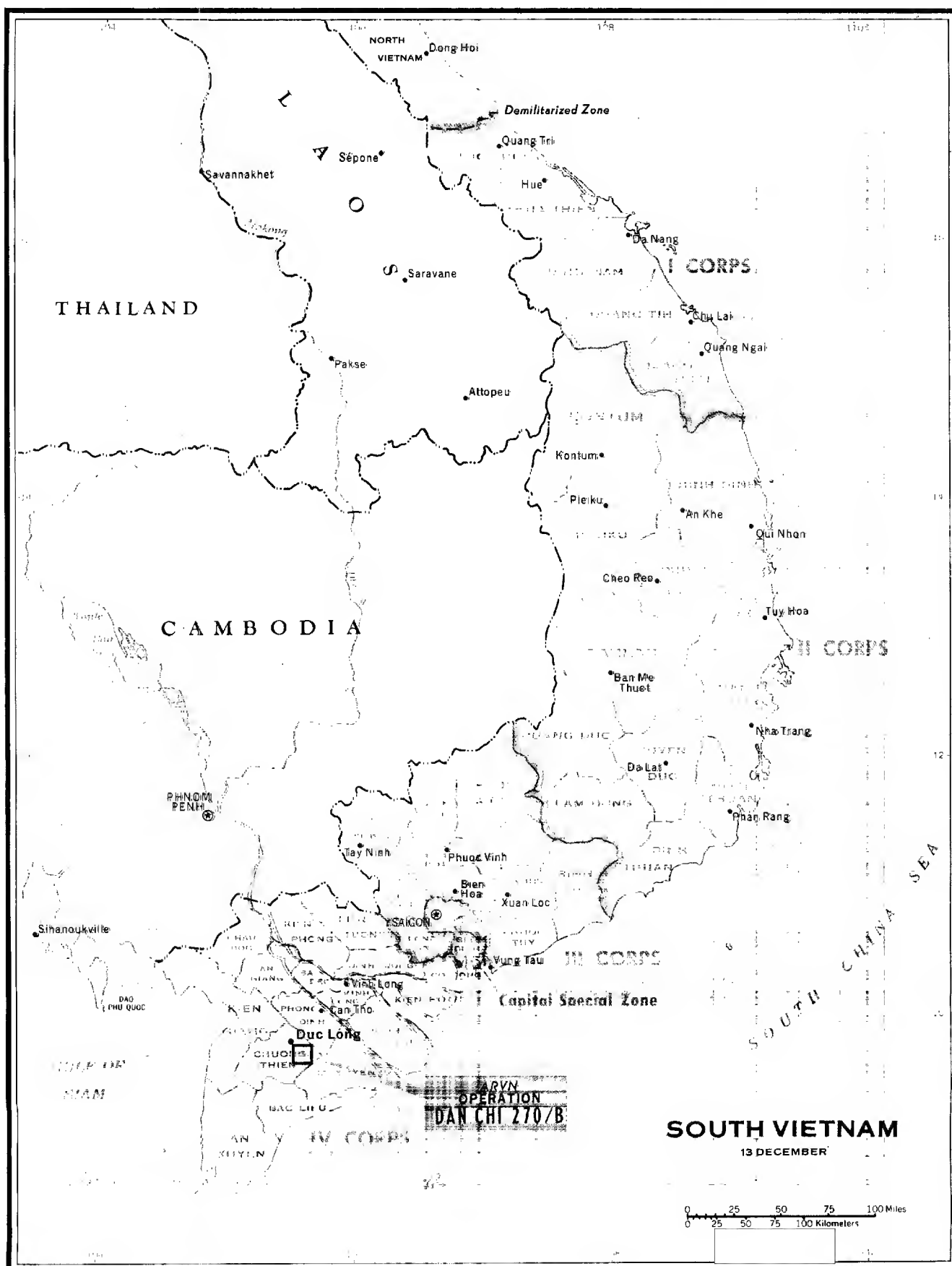
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US combat forces are participating in 12 of the 27 battalion-size or larger allied search-and-destroy operations currently in progress. No major contact with the enemy was reported in any of these operations on 13 December.

2. Elements of the ARVN 21st Division conducting search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 270B in the delta province of Chuong Thien overran a Viet Cong POW camp southwest of the provincial capital of Duc Long on 13 December. Sixty-four South Vietnamese paramilitary and regular troops were liberated by the friendly force. No enemy resistance was reported. Since it began on 12 December, the operation has had only light and sporadic contact with enemy main force units. Large quantities of Viet Cong documents, ammunition, and explosives have been captured, however.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 12 December, the Constituent Assembly continued to debate whether the future government should have a prime minister as well as a president. According to the US Embassy, the debate reflected extensive support for the inclusion of a prime minister. The proposal most frequently advanced was that the constitution should provide for a prime minister appointed by the president, with the assembly having the right to pass a motion of no confidence in the government. Many deputies in favor of this arrangement argued that the straight presidential system had not succeeded in preventing dictatorship in underdeveloped countries, and that Vietnam did not have any leader qualified to administer the executive branch by himself.

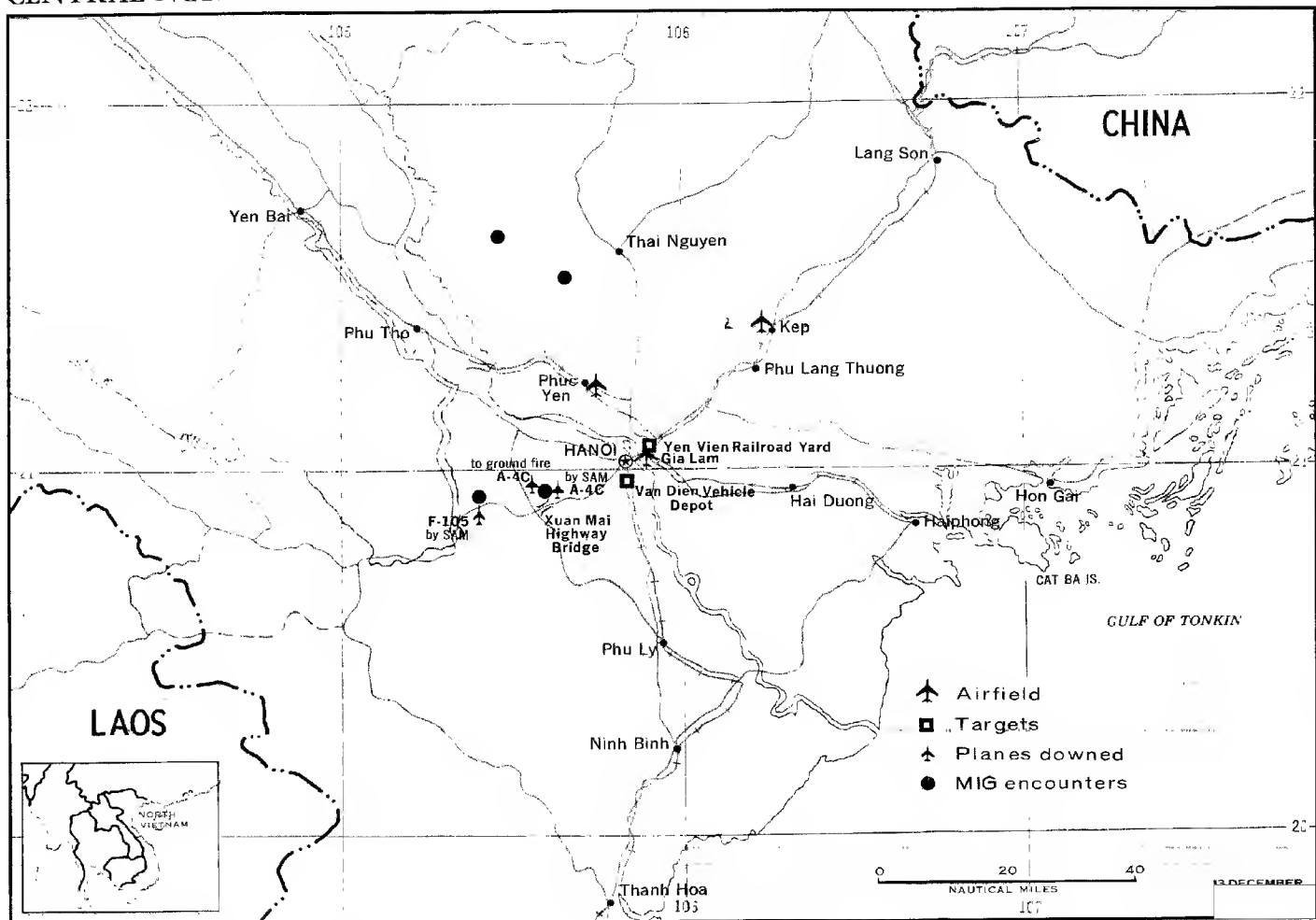
2. Opposition to the modified presidential formula came, according to the embassy, mostly from the more militant southern deputies, who have argued that such a formula could lead to disputes over authority between the president and the prime minister. The assembly adjourned without voting and was scheduled to resume the debate on 13 December.

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CENTRAL NORTH VIETNAM



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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. North Vietnamese air defense elements put up heavy resistance to US Air Force and Navy aircraft on 13 December when the US planes again struck three major targets within 20 miles of Hanoi. Two US planes were lost to surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and a third was downed by antiaircraft artillery. Preliminary pilot reports indicate that the attacks on the Yen Vien railroad yard, the Van Dien vehicle depot, and the Xuan Mai highway bridge were successful and that a SAM site was also destroyed.

2. DRV fighter aircraft reacted in record numbers, but failed to shoot down any US planes despite using air-to-air missiles (AAMs). No North Vietnamese aircraft were reported downed. Four flights of F-105s reported seven MIG encounters involving a total of at least 12 MIG-21s and 9 MIG-17s. The Communist interceptors attempted firing passes in only two instances, one of which involved the unsuccessful launching of an AAM. The DRV Air Force has yet to down a US aircraft with an air-to-air missile despite several efforts during the past two weeks.

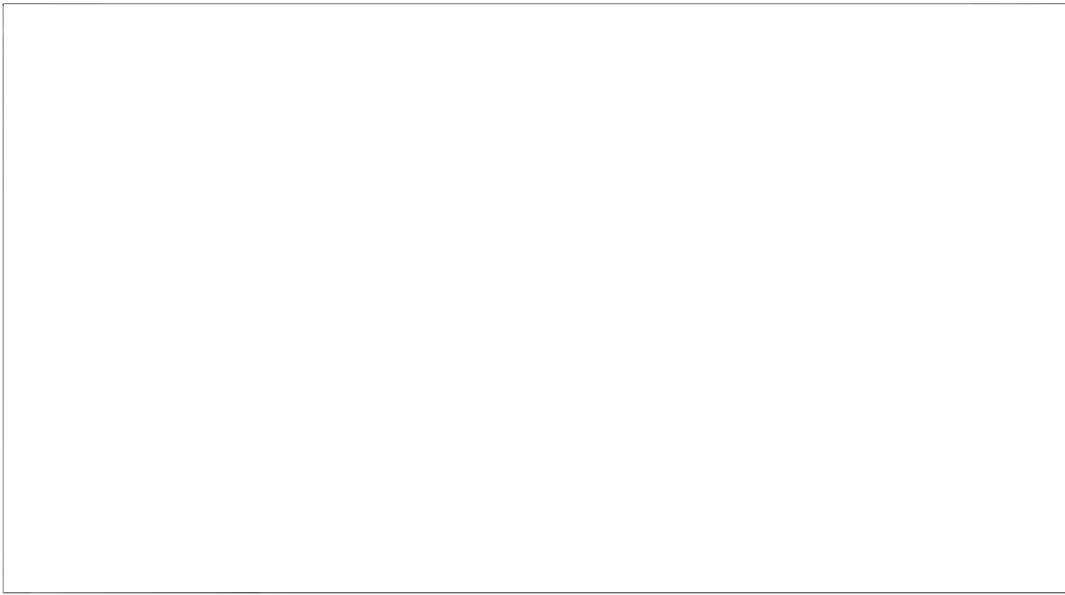
3. An F-105 was downed by an SA-2 missile about 27 miles southwest of Hanoi. The pilot could not be rescued because of his position. One navy A4C was damaged by a SAM near the Xuan Mai highway bridge and a second was hit by ground fire in the same area. The pilots were able to fly their aircraft back to the vicinity of the carrier USS Ticonderoga, but damage forced them to eject rather than attempt landing. Both men were rescued in good condition.

North Korean Flight Activity

4. North Korean pilots were active again over North Vietnam on 12 December, conducting flights between Phuc Yen, Hanoi/Gia Lam, and Kep airfields. This is the first instance in which the Koreans have operated out of bases other than Phuc Yen.

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